

Group Fitness Instructors

IDEA CODE OF ETHICS

As a member of IDEA Health & Fitness Association, I will be guided by the best interests of the client and will practice within the scope of my education and knowledge. I will maintain the education and experience necessary to appropriately teach classes; will behave in a positive and constructive manner; and will use truth, fairness and integrity to guide all my professional decisions and relationships.

Ethical Practice Guidelines for Group Fitness Instructors

- 1. Always be guided by the best interests of the group, while acknowledging individuals.**
 - a. Remember that a group fitness instructor's primary obligation is to the group as a whole, taking class level and class description into account.
 - b. Strive to provide options and realistic goals that take individual variations into account.
 - c. Offer modifications for all levels of fitness and experience (i.e., demonstrate easy and more challenging options).
 - d. Recommend products or services only if they will benefit a client's health and well-being, not because they will benefit you or your employer financially or occupationally.
- 2. Provide a safe exercise environment.**
 - a. Prioritize all movement choices by (1) safety, (2) effectiveness and (3) creativity. Do not allow creativity to compromise safety.
 - b. Use good judgment in exercise selection. Assess all class moves according to risk versus reward, making sure rewards and benefits always outweigh risks.
 - c. Adhere to safe guidelines for music speed in all classes.
 - d. Follow guidelines for maximum music volume. IDEA recommends that "music intensity during group exercise classes should measure no more than 90 decibels (dB). Since the instructor's voice needs to be about 10 dB louder than the music in order to be heard, the instructor's voice should measure no more than 100 dB."
 - e. Consider whether exercises that can be properly monitored in a one-to-one setting are appropriate in a group environment.
- 3. Obtain the education and training necessary to lead group exercise.**
 - a. Continuously strive to keep abreast of the latest research and exercise techniques essential to providing effective and safe classes.
 - b. Maintain certifications and continuing education.
 - c. Obtain specific training for teaching specialty classes or instructing special populations. Teach a class such as kickboxing or yoga only after mastering the skill and understanding the important aspects of the class. Instruct a special population, like older adults or perinatal women, only after studying the specific needs of the group.
 - d. Work within the scope of your knowledge and skill. When necessary, refer participants to professionals with appropriate training and expertise beyond your realm of knowledge.
- 4. Use truth, fairness and integrity to guide all professional decisions and relationships.**
 - a. In all professional relationships, clearly demonstrate and support honesty, integrity and trustworthiness.
 - b. Speak in a positive manner about fellow instructors, other staff, participants and competitive facilities and organizations or say nothing at all.
 - c. When disagreements or conflicts occur, focus on behavior, factual evidence and nonderogatory forms of communication, not on judgmental statements, hearsay, the placing of blame or other destructive responses.
 - d. Accurately represent your certifications, training and education.
 - e. Do not discriminate based on race, creed, color, gender, age, physical handicap or nationality.
- 5. Maintain appropriate professional boundaries.**
 - a. Never exploit—sexually, economically or otherwise—a professional relationship with a supervisor, an employee, a colleague or a client.
 - b. Use physical touching appropriately during classes, as a means of correcting alignment and/or focusing a client's concentration on the targeted area. Immediately discontinue the use of touch at a client's request or if the client displays signs of discomfort.
 - c. Avoid sexually oriented banter and inappropriate physical contact.
- 6. Uphold a professional image through conduct and appearance.**
 - a. Model behavior that values physical ability, function and health over appearance.
 - b. Demonstrate healthy behaviors and attitudes about bodies (including your own). Avoid smoking, substance abuse and unhealthy exercise and eating habits.
 - c. Encourage healthful eating for yourself and others.
 - d. Dress in a manner that allows you to perform your job while increasing the comfort level of class participants. Be more conservative in dress, decorum and speech when the class standard is unclear.
 - e. Establish a mood in class that encourages and supports individual effort and all levels of expertise.